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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 002022

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MAREB ROAD TEMPORARILY CLEARED FOR FUEL DELIVERIES

REF: A. SANAA 1986

[1](#)B. SANAA 1976

Classified By: CDA Nabeel Khoury for reasons 1.4 b and d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. July 24 at 19:30, armed members of the Al-Jaden tribe clashed with ROYG security forces approximately 30 miles west of Mareb City. According to Hunt Oil Security Chief Ralph Gonzales there were several casualties. The show of military force convinced the tribesmen to lift their blockade temporarily and to permit transport of diesel and kerosene from the Mareb refinery, the main source of these fuels for the capital. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) The following morning of July 25, the Ministry of Oil declared that the Mareb-Sanaa road was officially open and that fuel was available in markets throughout Sanaa. The government-controlled newspaper al-Thawra issued a similar statement from Mareb Governor Abdullah al-Nassi. Local journalists for al-Arabiya and AP confirm that hostilities have abated, but warn that the situation remains tenuous. Tribal leaders are awaiting talks with President Saleh, and are prepared to close the road again if they are unsatisfied with the outcome.

[1](#)3. (C) On July 20, tribal forces surrounded the Jannah Hunt oil refinery (ref A). The siege ended on July 23, following negotiations with the Yemeni military, but the tribes maintained a blockade of the Sanaa-Mareb road, shooting at delivery trucks attempting to pass. By July 24, the effects of the blockade could be felt in Sanaa. A shortage of cooking gas caused long lines outside vendors' shops, and customers waited up to ten hours to buy kerosene tanks. Despite news that the deliveries had resumed, long lines were visible the following day throughout the city.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: Mareb tribal leaders are capitalizing on the rioting and inflationary panic to advance long-standing complaints regarding oil profits (ref B). The local tribes believe the central government extracts natural resources from their land without sufficient compensation to the local population. This tension manifests itself periodically in isolated attacks and tribal clashes with security forces. The lifting of fuel subsidies added to tribal frustrations, as they believe they now have to pay more for their own oil. The sheikhs will use their upcoming meeting with Saleh to obtain financial concessions from the ROYG. End comment.
Khoury